AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.   1.   (Currently Amended) A method of ~~predicting~~ determining whether an individual having hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection will respond to interferon alpha (IFNα) treatment, the method comprising:

   i)   obtaining a pre-treatment sample from said HBV-infected individual,

   ii)   analyzing said pre-treatment sample for ~~determining~~ the presence or absence of antibodies reactive with a preS1 peptide consisting of the sequence of residues 94-117 (SEQ ID NO:1) ~~in a pre-treatment sample obtained from the individual, and~~;

   ~~predicting from~~ wherein the presence of said antibodies in said pre-treatment sample indicates that said individual will respond to said treatment ~~or predicting from~~ and the absence of said antibodies in said pre-treatment sample indicates that said individual will not respond to said treatment.

2.-3.   (Cancelled).

4.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the individual has chronic HBV infection.

5.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the individual is HBeAg positive.

6.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the individual is HBeAg

negative.

7.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein, in step (ii), said pre-

treatment sample is analyzed for the presence or absence of ~~the antibodies are~~ IgG or IgM

antibodies reactive with said preS1 peptide.

8.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the pre-treatment sample

is a blood, serum or plasma sample.

9.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein step (ii) comprises

~~comprising;~~:

contacting the pre-treatment sample with a preS1 peptide consisting of the sequence of

residues 94-117 (SEQ ID NO:1) and;

detecting the presence or absence of binding of ~~determining binding of~~ said antibodies to

said preS1 peptide.

10.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 9 wherein the preS1 peptide

comprises a detectable label.

11.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 9 wherein said preS1 peptide is

immobilised.

12.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9 wherein said binding is detected with a labelled secondary antibody.

13.-19. (Cancelled).

20.   (Currently Amended) A method of treating ~~a hepatitis B~~ an HBV infection in an individual identified as being responsive to IFNα comprising~~;~~:

      i)   obtaining a pre-treatment sample from an HBV-infected individual,

      ii)   analyzing said pre-treatment sample for ~~determining~~ the presence or absence of antibodies reactive with a preS1 peptide consisting of the sequence of residues 94-117 (SEQ ID NO:1) ~~in a pre-treatment sample obtained from the individual~~;

      ~~predicting from~~ wherein the presence of said antibodies in said pre-treatment sample indicates that said individual will respond to ~~interferon-alpha (IFNα)~~ IFNα treatment, and;

      administering IFNα to said individual identified as being responsive to IFNα.

21.   (Cancelled).

22.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 20 further comprising administering ~~wherein~~ corticosteroid to said individual identified as being responsive to IFNα ~~is administered to the individual~~.

23.   (Cancelled).

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